

WHAT UNCLE EPHRAIM THINKS
ABOUT IT

Gaiter, Fla., Aug. 28, 1908.

To the Editor Ocala Banner:

Uncle Ephraim begs to offer a few suggestions in regard to an act passed by the Florida legislature of 1907, amending an act granting pensions to old Confederate soldiers. By this amendment (?) the "property qualification" clause was done away with. That is, the wealthy old soldier, or one with a good income from his business, rents, investments, etc., would draw the same amount as the helpless and needy old soldier.

The Florida legislature of 1907 certainly broke the record in the way of needless and extravagant appropriations, and this amendment, for needless extravagance, like Abou Ben Aden's name, leads all the rest.

There was absolutely no need of it. It was absurd, and no good, common, political sense in it. It was like laying a heavy tax on the people to build an expensive bridge across a stream of water that had a good ford and was always fordable.

The old law was all right—no one was clamoring for a change.

The needy old soldier was satisfied, thankful and appreciative, while most of those drawing pensions under the new act were in no need of assistance from any source, and consequently their appreciation was nil.

There have been 3754 applications for pensions under the act of 1907—about doubling the number of pensioners. It is safe to assume that 2500 of these would draw pensions under the "property qualification" act, which, averaging \$100 each, would take \$250,000 each year to pay off the pensioners that have been added to the pension list by the new act. This, mind you, not for one year only, but for succeeding years, indefinitely.

The total number of pensioners, under the old and new acts, now amounts to 7220.

Now, Uncle Ephraim would respectfully suggest that the state of Florida, in lieu of a pension, have made and presented to all old Confederate veterans worth more than \$1000 or \$1200, a gold medal suitably inscribed, say with name, company, regiment, command, etc., or the battles they were in, or both, or any appropriate device decided on. The medals to be of solid gold and to cost \$50 each. Let it be something to be handed down to their descendants as cherished mementos and heirlooms in the family for generations to come—like the Victoria Cross, or the Cross of the Legion of Honor—a thing to be proud of and for their families to be proud of. There is nothing to be proud of in drawing a few dollars that you do not really need from the tax payers of an almost bankrupt state. Almost bankrupt! A few legislatures like the last will make it totally so.

The 2500 medals at \$50 each would cost the state \$125,000, a saving to the state of \$125,000 the first year, and approximately \$250,000 each year following for an indefinite time.

Make an estimate of the saving to the state for a few years, say five or six years to start on, and you will find that it beats draining the Everglades a whole lot. It drains the whole state of Florida.

Uncle Ephraim believes that a majority of those drawing pensions under the act of 1907 would favor the change. If they don't now, they will.

All honor to the brave old Confederate soldier, whether he be rich or a pauper, and God Almighty help and bless the helpless and needy old veteran.

UNCLE EPHRAIM.

DEMOCRATIC BATTLE HYMN

We are coming, Billy Bryan,
As we never came before;
From city, town and country side,
The hosts of freedom pour.
We fight once more the battle
That our fathers fought and won;
We're marching with the round
heads
And the troops of Washington.
Then rally round our banner, boys,
Rally, once again!
There's room for every patriot
Among the Bryan men.

The tainted-money barons
Shall no longer make our laws,
Nor grafters in the judgment-seat
Betray the people's cause.
The motto on our banner
By which we stand or fall,
Is "Down with special privilege,
And equal rights for all."
Then rally round the banner, boys,
Rally, once again!
The place for every patriot
Is with the Bryan men.

For years we've followed Bryan
Through disaster and defeat
Till at last the nation's with us,
And our hero can't be beat.
The people's cause shall triumph
In the reign of righteous law—
Then hurrah for Billy Bryan!
For our victory hurrah!
Come, rally round our banner, boys,
Rally, once again!
To welcome every patriot
Who joins the Bryan men.

S. S. G.

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